

72-3165/1  
OGC SUBJ: RELEASE  
OF INFORMATION

July 24, 1972.

Mr. Angus M. Thuermer,  
Ass't to Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505.

Dear Mr. Thuermer:

This is in reference to your letter of June 26 regarding the six questions submitted by this bureau under the President's Executive Order regarding declassification of variously classified information.

Since that time the whole question of particularity and costing of research incident to identification and location of hitherto classified information has been discussed by Mr. Max Frankel, The Washington Correspondent, and by me with Mr. David Young of the Inter-Agency Review Committee.

Mr. Frankel and I were encouraged to believe that the departments and agencies to which the questions were directed would be less exacting in the matter of particularity if we could rework the question to provide more precise descriptions of the material sought. This proved to be true in the case of the State and Defense Departments and the N.S.C., all of which have begun processing some of the questions without waiting for more precise descriptions on which this bureau is now working.

It is noted that, in connection with the six questions submitted, one concerned a document not available to C.I.A. while you "were unable to locate documents responsive" to two other questions. It seems to us that this latter point is arguable since it does not discharge the responsibility of the Executive Order. While waiving any argument for the moment, we may wish to make it later in an analysis for publication on the implementation of the President's order--or lack of it.

On question 2, 3 and 5 you say that we "have not described the documents you requested with sufficient particularity to permit them to be located or identified with reasonable effort". What you may consider a "reasonable effort" we have no way of knowing. But this summary rejection of the three questions on grounds of non-particularity suggests an unwillingness to pursue the declassification order in the spirit in which it was intended.

In any case an effort is being made to rephrase the three questions if only to fulfill our commitment to Mr. Young. They will be mailed to you under separate cover.

Sincerely,

Felix Belair, Jr.